

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CANADIAN COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT 33RD UNGA

REF: USUN 2857

1. SUMMARY: CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIAL WARNS THAT PROLIFERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS AT UNGA COULD DIFFUSE AND DIMINISH IMPACT OF OVERALL HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORT. HUNGARIANS HAVE APPROACHED CANADIANS TO EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO COSTA RICAN RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER. CANADIAN DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IS FORMING UN HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OFFICE TO CENTRALIZE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AUGUST 23 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, DEPUTY DIRECTOR ALAN ROWE OF UN INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DIVISION (UNS) IN EXTAFF, ASKED ABOUT PRESENT US THINKING ON POSSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES OUTLINED IN RECENT BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS IN NEW YORK (USUN 2857). HE INQUIRED PARTICULARLY INTO SUGGESTED NEW AGENDA ITEM ON
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COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION OF UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES, WHICH USUN HAD INDICATED WAS UNDER DISCUSSION IN US. ROWE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT GROWING "FOREST" OF SEPARATE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTIONS HELD DANGER OF DIFFUSING AND NEUTRALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS THRUST IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE BELIEVED IT WAS BETTER STRATEGY TO CONCENTRATE ON SMALL NUMBER OF KEY OBJECTIVES, SUCH AS STRENGTHENING

HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION STAFF. ROWE SUGGESTED THAT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS MIGHT BE SUFFICIENT TO ENCOMPASS MOST HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. FOR EXAMPLE, AGENDA ITEM 12 (ECOSOC) WOULD BE THE PLACE TO PUT CAMBODIA AND CHILE "IN THE DOCK", IF DESIRED.

3. LATEST EXAMPLE OF PROLIFERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES CITED BY ROWE WAS COSTA RICA'S RE-INTRODUCTION OF UN HIGH COMMISSIONER PROPOSAL (AGENDA ITEM 129). HE SAID HUNGARIAN CHARGE IN OTTAWA HAD MADE DEMARCHE AUGUST 22 AGAINST COSTA RICAN RESOLUTION, ON GROUNDS THAT REPORT OF "OVERALL ANALYSIS" WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IS CONDUCTING IS NOT DUE UNTIL 34TH UNGA. CANADIANS HAD REPLIED THAT HRC HAD MANDATE TO KEEP 33RD UNGA INFORMED AND, IN ANY CASE, THEY IN PRINCIPLE FAVORED CREATION OF POST ALONG LINES OF HIGH COMMISSIONER.

4. ROWE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US VIEWS ON HOW CHILE (AND ARGENTINA) HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS SHOULD BE HANDLED IN INTERNATIONAL FORA THIS YEAR, IN WAKE OF RECENT VISIT BY HRC COMMITTEE TO CHILE. HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT LAST YEAR'S "ROUGH" TREATMENT OF CHILE MAY HAVE BEEN COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

5. ROWE MENTIONED THAT UNS IS BEING RECONSTITUTED AS UN HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, IN EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE MORE EFFECTIVE CENTRAL CONTROL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POINT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS IN CANADIAN DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS MODEST CHANGE, AND SAID IMPORTANCE OF NEW DIVISION WOULD NOT APPROACH THAT OF STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS. PLACKE

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